



THE

IDLE AND INDUSTRIOUS

MEMOR.

by Alonzo Delano, 1806-
1874



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P R E F A C E .

THE pretensions of the little book thus given to the public, are humble. The designer of the pictures (Mr. Nahl) has succeeded in a life-like portrayal of scenes in the mines; the engraver (Mr. Armstrong) has brought his drawings out in masterly relief; while the highest boon claimed by the author, is to have contributed a few descriptive verses with a moral—the only recommendation, perhaps, which they contain.

Of similar publications issued from the press of California, it is questionable whether any have come so near to the portrayal of actual mining life as this. There are but two courses for the miner to pursue—one of industry and sobriety; the other of indolence and vice. These are generally shunned or indulged according to the early education, natural tastes, or degrees of temptation by which the miner is surrounded. Fortunate is he whose better judgment leads him to an emulation of the honesty and sedulous devotion which are represented as characterising the triumphant hero of this little poem.



THE IDLE AND INDUSTRIOUS MINER.



TWO school-boy friends, with buoyant hearts,
And grown to man's estate,
Repaired to California's shores,
To fill their cup of fate:
Endowed with noble gifts of mind,
And vigorous in health,
Their future seemed a harvest-field,
Abundant in its wealth.
Lured by a hope of rapid gain,
The mines at once they sought,

Contented with a cabin home,
In a secluded spot;
Their start in life was equal, and
At first the race was fair,
But soon resembled that between
The TORTOISE AND THE HARE.

Advice Gratis.

You know Charley I have done all I
could for you and ain't tired yet. But
take off those clothes and buy a real
miners dress and see if the change
of costume and ha-
bits don't make a happier
you man.

Pitiless.

I've had the worst luck of any man
in California. All the claims I
bought turned out failures. I wrote
home for money to start again, and
would you believe it they refused
to send it — say something about
their families — and that sort
of things.



Men do not always realize

Their cherished dreams of youth,
For often wormwood lies concealed
Within the bud of truth.

While one the glittering prize plucks down,
Another's reach is vain—
Ambition dies within him, and
He never tries again.

'Tis thus our story takes its rise,
To trace the different ends—

The efforts, triumphs and mishaps

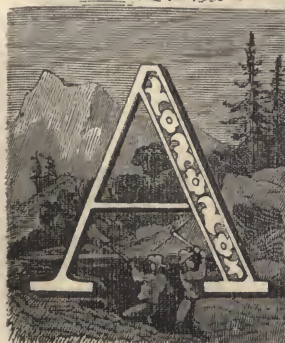
Of these respective friends ;—

How nobly one achieved the goal

Of fortune and renown,

And how the other's sun of life

In clouds of shame went down.



ND now, behold! at early dawn,
 Before the mists have fled,
 Our zealous hero seeks his claim,
 Beside a river's bed;
 As yet unused to toil, his hands
 Are cramped and numbed with pain,
 But in his heart an honest pride
 Forbids him to complain.
 The future is a promised world,
 In which his fortune lies,

And industry, alone, he feels,
 Can win its golden prize.
 Already, in the vale below,
 He hears the pick and spade,
 And hastes to greet the busy throng,
 And join their delving trade.



AD, there should be a converse side
 To such a pleasant view,
 But history demands the pen
 To frame its record true.
 The early morn had come and gone,
 And in the amber sky
 The sun had slowly climbed his course
 And stood at noonday high.
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor thoughts of fame
 Disturb the sluggard's rest,
 Last night's debauch has left its sting,
 And borne away their zest.
 This, then, is how the idler friend
 Commenced a bad career,
 So fatally and madly run
 Within his mining year.



EQUITED toil! Eureka! Look!

And read within those eyes
Their speaking luster, as they dwell
Upon the glittering prize!

The vein is struck! ah, noble heart!

A thrill of joy is thine!—

A purer and a better thrill
Than that produced by wine.

A thousand thoughts of home, and bliss

Reserved for coming years

Have swiftly flashed across thy soul

And melted thee to tears—

Tears—not of grief, or vain regrets,

For thou art still a man—

But, thinking of thy poverty

And gazing in the pan!



URN to the other loitering friend

Yet on a drunken spree—

His tools neglected, and his face

The type of idiocy.

The bottle is his chief delight,

No care disturbs his brain,

He smokes, and chews, and yawns, and drinks,

And wakes and drinks again ;

Or when he leaves his cabin walls

To dig an hour or so,

Ill luck attends him,—so he thinks,—

Wherever he may go.

Forever armed with some excuse

He deems his cause is good,

Till want assails him at his door

And drives him forth for food.

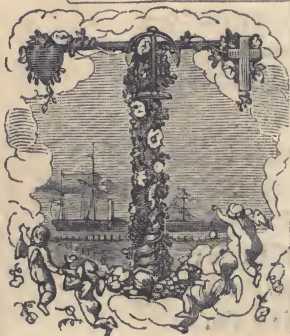
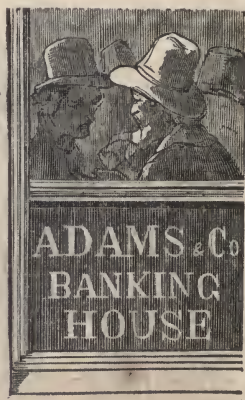


MBITTERED at his low estate—
 Unmindful of its cause—
 The sluggard mopes away his hours
 Indifferent to applause.
 His noble friend appeals to him
 To stimulate his pride,
 By representing wealth to flow
 On fortune's courted tide ;
 He dilates on his own success,
 Then offers half his claim

To share his fellow's wretchedness
 And rescue him from shame.

Alas! when emulation dies

There's no Promethean coal
 To kindle up its wasted fires
 And re-illumine the soul!



THE DEUM! the banking-house is sought!

For, see, the well filled sack
Our zealous hero proudly bears
Upon his sturdy back ;
A hundred envious eyes behold
The nature of his gains—
A hundred envious hearts desire
The gold his sack contains ;
But once secure within the vault
Where Adams holds the key

And little danger's to be feared
From theft or treachery.
A draft at three per cent. relieves
The mind of every care,
And when remitted safely home
The drawer knows 'tis there!



HAT other heart could feel a thrill
 Of pleasure more sincere
 On hearing of his great success
 Than that of "mother dear ;"
 So down the thoughtful miner sits
 Elate with joy to write,
 His tools about him, and his "stew"
 Before him, full in sight.
 There's not a hope his breast contains—
 An anguish or a fear,

But memory retains to break

Unto that mother's ear ;

He told her all, and asked her prayers

To keep his heart from guile :

And when he sweetly slept that night

His face revealed a smile.



H! woful picture of distress !

The idler takes his pen,
His ragged coat and shaggy beard

Denote him worst of men ;
But there is still within his soul

A principle of truth,
Which he has borne unspotted through
His days of well-trained youth.

"*Dear mother !*" this is what he writes,
And saddened by the word,

He feels a gush of tenderness

Within his bosom stirred ;

With too much power it racks his mind,

And from the bottle's store

He turns the liquor out, and drinks

Till he can write no more.



ORN—Sabbath morning! at his door

The thoughtful miner sits,

His sister's Bible to peruse

As such a morn befits ;

The birds are sporting near his feet,

Rich flowers are by his side,

And as he reads, his heart resolves

That God shall be his guide.

He goes not where the noisy throng

Resort at games to play,

But profits by a goodly work

On this, a goodly day.

As twilight falls, his evening meal

In silence he partakes,

And soundly sleeping through the night

Again at sunrise wakes.



EAR MOTHER!" it were well to pause

And leave the page unfilled
Nor tell how deep in vice the hand
That traced the line was skilled!

Amid a throng of curious men
That Sabbath night it tossed
The only coin the idler owned
Upon a card, which lost.

"Make way!" a dealer sternly cries,
Who hauls the money down;

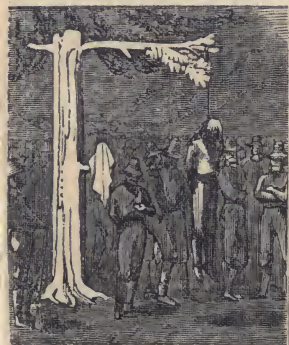
"Make way!" the second one repeats,
And hurls an angry frown.

A dozen hands lent willing aid,
And backward through the crowd
They drew their humbled victim, whom
They left subdued and cowed.



"HANDS OFF!" a drunkard grown to be,
 It were a bootless task
 To drag the idler from the bar
 While it contains a flask.
 His truest friend exhorts in vain—
 In vain the landlord's threat,
 He struggles for another glass
 On which his heart is set:
 In pity fill a bumper up,
 To quench his burning thirst!

He has no greater joy in life,
 And fate may do its worst.
 The moon shone softly down that night
 Where stupefied and pale,
 A senseless man deserted lay
 Within a quiet vale!



LY, thou guilty culprit, fly!

The fatal weapon aimed
Would doom thee to a felon's death,
For thou art thief proclaimed!
Fly to some cavern, where with wolves
Thy home may haply be—
Not one amid the mob bestows
A kindly thought on thee!
A gallows to thy maddened brain
Appears in frightful view,

And to avoid its frowning form
Seems more than thou canst do.
This is remorse—alas! too late,
For months of wasted time;
Before thy better nature changed
And thou wert steeped in crime!



THROUGH forest and on road pursued

The guilty man at last
Escapes unhurt, and lays him down
To think upon the past;
Oh, God! how sorrowful his groans—
How bitter flow his tears,
When recollection paints the hues
Of boyhood's brighter years!
Concealed within a worn-out claim,
He deems himself secure,

And finds his guilt the only thing

His thoughts cannot endure.

He gazes on the rattlesnake

With neither dread nor care;

But yields himself completely up

A victim to despair.



ONG hours past—thrice had the day

Its course of glory sped,
Yet, on that wretched man, the sun
No ray of comfort shed.

By hunger driven forth at last,
He begged a crust of bread,
But found the hearts of those he asked
To all his pleadings dead.

“My God!” he cried, “and must I starve
Where Plenty yields her store!”

And seizing on a tray of food
Rushed wildly for the door.
The landlord struck him with a knife
Before he could depart;
At which the frenzied culprit turned
And stabbed him to the heart!



ENCLOSED within a prison's walls
 Through all the dreary night
 A madman's frantic cries resound
 To curd the blood with fright;
 A pack of prowling wolves have caught
 The rattling of his chains,
 And pause to mingle with the sound
 Their own unearthly strains!
 Not long that noble frame shall writhe;
 Not long that strength be shown;

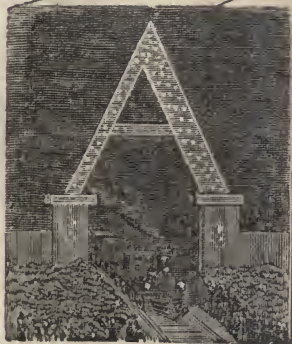
For death is smiling through the bars,
 And claims them for his own.

E'en while those startled eye-balls glare,
 The heart grows icy cold;

He falls—what else concerns his fate
 Is easy to be told.



ROUND the felon's corpse there stand
 Three men of gentle mein,
 By whom such sights as these, perhaps,
 Had many times been seen.
 The earliest and fondest friend
 Bends o'er it, filled with grief;
 The man of God has named the cross
 And its repentant thief.
 To die from home, alas! is sad;
 But oh, far sadder yet,
 To feel our crimes are what the world
 Refuses to forget.
 Then let a tear of pity fall,
 Nor curse the idler's doom.
 He was a miner—may his faults
 Lie buried in his tomb!



H! holy spectacle of love!
 A sister's gentle hand—
 A pious mother's fond embrace
 Are what its joys command!
 The long lost son is back again
 From California's shore—
 The brother's ample purse is filled
 With pounds of shining ore!
 He brings them home his winning smile—
 A form robust and strong—

And soul unspotted by the crimes
 Of those he fell among.
 He tells his friends, that wish to know
 The cause of his success,
 That those who seek the mines must work,
 AND DRINK AND GAMBLE LESS!



